Exploitation of Atomic Mineral

2057. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether huge deposits of Uranium and thorium have been found in the Singhbhum district of Bihar and in the coastal areas of Kerala and Orissa;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what steps are contemplated by Government to exploit the deposits to generate cheaper atomic power in these States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) Deposits of uranium have been identified in the Singhbum district of Bihar and of thorium in the form of monazite in the beach sands along the coastal areas of Kerala and Orissa. The total reserves identified so far are 56,000 tonnes of uranium oxide in Singhbum district and 1,02,000 tonnes of thorium oxide contained in 1.13 million tonnes of monazite in Kerala and 87,000 tonnes of thorium oxide contained in 1.0 million tonnes of monazite in Orissa.

(c) Exploitation of the uranium deposits in Singhbum district has been going on, in a phased manner over the last three decades, for production of fuel for the nuclear power plants based on the Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWR). PHWR based nuclear power plants constitute the existing (first) state of India's nuclear power generation programme. By itself, thorium cannot be used as a fuel for nuclear power reactors. However, when irradiated, thorium gets converted into uranium (233) which can be used as a fuel for nuclear reactors. Nuclear power reactors based on the thorium-uranium (233) fuel cycle constitute the proposed third stage of development in the nuclear power programme of the country.

Grant of ISP licences to private companies

2058. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to grant the Internet Service Providers (ISP) licences to 47 companies shortlisted for the purpose;

(b) how many ISP licences would be provided to these companies and which areas of the country would be left to these companies for carrying on their operations;

(c) whether these companies had not submitted applications for such licenses in July last;

(d) whether these applications had not been cancelled by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India; and

(e) if so, why these companies were considered eligible subsequently and granted licences?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Government propose to grant the Internet Service Provider (ISP) licence to all Companies who apply for the same, and meet the eligibility criteria. On 6th November, 1998, i.e. on the date of announcement of the new ISP Policy, 47 applications were pending. There is no question of any shortlisting as far as ISP licenses are concerned.

(b) Out of the 47 applications 25 have been issued. A list of these companies alongwith their area of operations is available in enclosed statement (*see* below). Six applications were withdrawn by the respective companies. Nine applications have been approved and the companies have been intimated to come for signing of the licence agreement. Seven applications are incomplete.

(c) Out of the 47 applications, 29 applications were submitted by July, 1998.

(d) These applications had not been cancelled by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India.

(e) Not applicable in view of (c) and (d) above.